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//PUBLISHER/EDITOR|ASSIST. PUBLISHER//
//  RON KOVACS    |  KEN KIRCHNER    //
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Syndicate Publications
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Editors Desk

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by Ron Kovacs

Comment on the recent STX-Press uploads have been delegated to the file uploaded to GENIE 2/28/88. Please refer to ST-REPORT COMMENTARY on the ST RT.

This particular part of the issue was included before press time. At 1:46pm EST, my wife gave birth to a baby boy. 7 pounds, 10z, 22" long. We have named him: Adam Michael Kovacs. It was a long fight but we have the just reward. It being 4:30 pm and since I have been awake for about a day and a half. I will pack it in for the night. Thanks to everyone who has been sending the email! It has been appreciated!!

South-eastern Regional Headquarters for ST-Report and ZMagazine is:
The Bounty ST BBS (904) 786-4176.

North-eastern Regional Headquarters for ST-Report and ZMagazine is:
The XBN-ZMAG BBS (617) 770-0197.

ST-Report and Genie?

Midtown TV Report

Have you heard the latest...

by Mr. Goodprobe

According to the mourners at Apple it will be Spring before the cramp on one meg ram chips begins to ease up a bit seems trade problems, the yen, and a myriad of other problems have worked havoc on add-in storage items for the Mac, and most certainly this hasn't helped Atari in its quest to make the Mega the popular business-type machine it so desperately needs. Apples problems are severe as the recently introduced Hypercard needs to be run in an environment of at least one meg.

Need a nice laptop? Try IBM...heh..they are selling their \$1,995 PC Convertible Model II at the employee discount price of \$498..they need to make room in their warehouse for their new -286 and -386 based machines...

Apple and DEC have signed an alliance..big news for the business world for sure...

Activision has acquired Triton Products in California, and now have their own direct marketing firm. They also acquired, uh oh, Rainbird and Firebird from Telecomsoft. I sure hope this doesn't ruin these 2 firms, as in my humble opinion they recently produced some of the best software ever for the ST. Activision presently also owns Infocom, Gamestar, and Electric Dreams, which means they are a veritable software giant, and can be the death or life of our beloved ST...please support them!!!

Star Micronics has finally introduced their first model in the laser-printer field, the Star Laserprinter 8. This gem has a normal configuration of 1 meg internal ram, but can be upgraded to 2 meg. It prints full page bit-mapped text and graphics at the amazing norm for laserprinters of 300 by 300 dots per inch. It comes with emulation modes of the HP Laserjet Plus, Diablo 630, Epson EX-800, and the IBM Proprinter. Paper loading on this printer is the usual superlative style of ease and flexibility which has set the Star line apart as one of the finest in my opinion. The list is \$2,699, but I have no idea what it actually will be selling for.

A further note about the PC Pursuit upgrade I mentioned in a past article. Word is now that by mid-February the following cities will have been upgraded to 2,400 baud, this in addition to the present 1,200 baud service they now enjoy...

Atlanta	Boston
Chicago	Dallas
Denver	Detroit
Houston	Los Angeles
Newark	New York
Philadelphia	San Francisco
Seattle	Washington

Waldenbooks is now opening (last week) a chain of discount software centers, and they hope to have 30 stores open by the end of 1988. I visited one, and although the stock of St and Atari 8 bit programs was not overwhelming, they did recognize the fact that possible someone might want a program or two for these great computers. Bravo! I hope they continue and in time upgrade that support!

Due to time constraints, this one is going to be short. Stay tuned to the next few issues, I will be popping more hardware projects in future issues of Zmag.

Along the line of the hardware hacker, I was speaking to the fine folk at Happy Computing. Seems there are some undocumented features to the new cartridge they are producing. The "Discovery Cartridge" although not a mere cartridge, is as we all know designed to copy software of any format out there as long as you have the proper drive. Within this gem is 2 eprom sockets for programs that the users wishes to install within the cartridge itself, and some things they recommended would be custom menus and utilities. He also mentioned that one could install Macintosh roms, and with a bit of rewiring, use it with Magic Sac. Since there is a thru-port on the Discovery Cart I hope users will support the monumental efforts of David Small, and still purchase the original Magic Sac cartridge. I have to admit that even the fact that they mentioned its proposed possibility of use as a Magic Sac makes me question the intent of their product. Other options available to the user via this cartridge are much more palatable to this writer.

Keep those Atari's hummin!

Mr. Goodprobe

(on lend from)

Midtown TV 27 Midway Plaza Tallmadge, Ohio 44278

(216)633-0997 Atari 8/16 Repair/Sales

BBS (216)784-0574 300/1200 24 hours

Midwest Zmag Headquarters

Online program support for: Atari 8 bit/ST/Amiga Computers

Atari News Update

ATARI TO UNVEIL UNIX-LIKE SYSTEM (Feb. 22)

Look for Atari Corp. to use the stage of next month's Hanover Computer Fair in West Germany for the coming-out party of its new low-cost Unix-like, 68030-based workstations.

Computergram International newsletter reports that the workstation is based on Whitesmiths' Idris system which Atari licensed last year. In addition, the newsletter reports it hears that Atari also will introduce a desktop publishing system for under \$5,000, "getting close to the price of a good laser printer alone."

The publication says the system will be composed of the Mega computer, the SLM804 laser printer and Atari Deskset software. "The software is claimed to put true WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) on the screen," CI says, "and page formatting will be handled inside the computer rather than on the printer, 1 meg of memory being dedicated to laser printer commands."

Computergram International is a regular feature of NewsNet.

Mac Report---Misc Reports---

Known Bugs in DAS 4.0

- 1) The Monogram Converter doesn't work for me. The work around is to boot from the system and Finder that came with DAS 4.0.
- 2) I Cannot delete auto-sets, I get an error 18. There is no work around, but the auto-set can be replaced.
- 3) Sometimes, when editing a transaction, the changes that I make don't "take". There is a work around. When editing a transaction, and you

change a distribution account, and you select that account from the scrolling list of accounts, The change will not "take" unless you change anything else in the transaction.

- 4) I get an Error 1 when printing checks, or the checks come out with transactions repeated or are garbled. There is a work around. Always preview every check before printing it.
- 5) There are spelling errors when the check is printed. There is no work around at this time.
- 6) The Budget calculator does not amortize correctly. There is no work around.
- 7) The cash flow report is incorrect. The net flow should be added to the cash at start. Right now it is subtracted.
- 8) Crashes under MultiFinder. No work around.
- 9) The LaserWriter background printing spooler with MultiFinder "clips" the page. The 1st page is OK, but the rest are "strange." Don't use the spooler. However, 4.0 does work with other spoolers.

VAPORWARE FOR SALE

By LINDSY VAN GELDER

Lotus Magazine, February 1988.

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Two Christmases ago, (Christmas 1986), I bought a Mac Plus and immediately began looking for a high-end word processor. An ad in the current issue of MacWorld for a product called FullWrite Professional made the program sound as if it would not only process my words but possibly scrub my floors and empty the kitty litter box. According to the ad, it was expected to obsolete all existing text-based products.

In the months following, I saw many other FullWrite ads, all swearing that the program was the greatest thing since fork-split English muffins. The most memorable ad was a two-page spread published in April, when the long-awaited Microsoft Word for the Macintosh Version 3.0 had begun to ship. DONT BUY IT, shrieked the headline; instead, hold on just a bit longer for FullWrite, a superior word processor, at a better price at your store within 60 days. And were going to change serious writing forever.

"Forever" turned out to be a good description, not of how long it would take FullWrite to set the world of serious writing on its ear, but of how long it would take to get into the store. As of early November, it was still not there.

In the computer biz, this stuff is called vaporware, but I think the term is too kind. Something that promises to deliver the greatest experience of your life and then stands you up can only be described as fraudulent.

And while I do mean to pick on FullWrite, I dont mean to single it out the company merely provides a good example of how preannouncing products

can sometimes freeze consumer buying decisions. (FullWrite's number one competitor in the knock-Word-off-the-throne sweepstakes, the Mac version of WordPerfect, has been delayed even longer than FullWrite.)

This marketing technique is rampant in the computer industry. For example, Lotus Development Corp. has said that the availability of 1-2-3 for the Mac will be announced during the second half of 1988; 1-2-3 Release 3 will be available mid 1988, and so on.

I'd like to believe that vaporware is just the legacy of the computer industry's hippie past, the days when your typical software company employee had to be prodded into wearing shoes on the job. But the current delays seem less and less like mellowed-out goof-ups and more and more like cynical hog-the-market policy.

Stewart Alsop's P.C. Letter has been keeping tabs on vaporware since 1985. Some products stay on the list for years, such as Crosstalk Mk. 4 announced April 1985, shipped May 1987.

Alsop says that what bugs him isn't that the companies take time to come out with new products, since as any project manager can tell you, where software is concerned, there's no correlation between the resources dedicated to a project and the time it takes to complete it. Alsop says, "In fact, with software, unlike with building a building, it's probably true that the more programmers you assign, the more complicated it's going to get, and the longer it will take." Nor does Alsop blame companies whose delayed products end up being the subject of wide-scale, industry-shaking rumors (the classic example being IBM's PCjr).

What he objects to is the official announcements of products, whether or not they're anywhere near the market. It's horrible for the customer, "It drives people nuts when they try to be conscientious consumers; they read the magazines and make their decisions on that basis and then get screwed by the politics of these vaporware companies."

Vaporware is especially rampant on the Mac world at the moment, according to Alsop, since it's a dynamic market where big bucks can still be made by the standard-setters, "but these things go in cycles, and you're going to see it happening in the OS/2 environment too." Not every company is guilty of pushing vaporware, of course, but it's a widespread problem.

Can you imagine Ford Motor Co. taking out an ad in Newsweek telling the world that in exactly two months, it's going to come out with a car that has all the features of a BMW, at half the price; and then, at the appointed deadline, producing NOTHING? No you can't because nobody in America is that arrogant or that dumb; not even politicians.

Nobody except companies in the computer industry, which is supposed to be leading us all into a better, more productive future.

SPC Newswire

CREDIT CARD SOFTWARE SIGNS MARKETING DEAL WITH IBM

ORLANDO, Fla. (FEB. 24) PRWIRE - Credit Card Software, Inc., a leading worldwide supplier of bankcard/revolving credit processing software systems, has signed an Industry Marketing Assistance Program, or IMAP, agreement with IBM Corporation.

Credit Card Software, Inc. is a worldwide supplier of bankcard/revolving

credit processing software systems. The agreement calls for IBM to jointly market CCS software systems, increasing CCS's visibility among community banks, as well as in the retail and other nonfinancial environments.

CCS is the only revolving credit processing software vendor to have such an agreement with IBM.

IBM, MICROSOFT BEGIN ROAD SHOW TO TOUT NEW COMPUTER LINE

SEATTLE (FEB. 24) UPI - International Business Machines Corp. and Microsoft Corp. Wednesday launched a series of conferences meant to stir up excitement among large clients and computer distributors for a new generation of personal computers.

The three-day Seattle forum was the first of about a dozen similar events planned around the country in the next several months. The sessions will educate potential customers about the capabilities and promise of increased productivity in the IBM Personal System-2 series of computers, said IBM spokesman James Monahan Jr.

The PS-2 system was introduced last year with much fanfare and seen as IBM's attempt to regain its edge in the fiercely competitive PC market.

It was designed to work with Microsoft's OS-2 -or Operating System-2 - the successor to the enormously successful MS-DOS operating system, the soul of millions of personal computers around the world. "1988 is a year of transition, a year in which I believe that every week someone will be announcing a new OS-2 application," said Bill Gates, chairman and chief executive officer of Microsoft.

Gates said about 90 software programs designed for OS-2 are now on the market but predicted about 1,000 would be available by the end of the year.

IBM and Microsoft produced a slick program to convince customers- especially large corporate clients who already have invested in hundreds or even thousands of older computers - that the transition to the more advanced models will not be especially painful and that software already has been developed to take advantage of their capabilities.

QMI Update

ST-TALK Professional (\$29.95)

QMI has been supporting the Atari ST since 1985 with the release of the original ST-TALK modem program. The new GEM version, ST-TALK Professional, brings advanced features and simplicity to the Atari ST at a very low price. A demo version of ST-Talk Pro is available in the QMI data library.

DeskCart! (\$99.95)

Lots of functions in a little package, DeskCart gives you 14 Accessories and a battery-backed Clock in a plug-in ROM cartridge. The hardware & software product includes: a calendar/appointment book, notebook, calculator, cardfile, typewriter, address book/dialer, vt-52 terminal, keyboard macros, ramdisk, disk utilities, print spooler, control panel, screen dump and memory test. The clock hardware sets the system date and time automatically each time you power up.

BB/ST (\$49.95)

Powerful on-line bulletin board system. BB/ST offers infinitely programmable prompts, menus and system configuration. The "tree" structured message system organizes message threads with up to 128 main discussion topics.

There's electronic mail, on-line polls and batch file transfer protocols. BB/ST may be further customized with script language files and external TOS programs running on-line.

ProTablet ST (\$395.00)

This Professional Graphics Tablet replaces the mouse device for virtually all CAD and graphics programs. ProTablet uses a comfortable drawing pen and digitizing tablet with an active area of up to 8 x 12 inches. All cables and driver software are included in the complete package.

Whats New On CompuServe

WHAT'S NEW IN SIG*ATARI

(Feb. 16)

NEW FORUM SOFTWARE

A new version of the Forum Software was installed in all three Atari Forums.

Most changes are internal, however, there are some changes to the USER OPTIONS area (OP) of the Forum. Please see FORUM.235 in DL 0 of the ATARI 8-Bit or 16-Bit Forum for details!

** The ATARI 16-Bit Forum ** (GO ATARI16)

The newest edition of ST-REPORT #21 is now available in DL 8. If you haven't been reading the monthly editions of this EXCELLENT Atari-oriented newsletter, we urge you to take a look at the latest copies. Nice job, Ron Kovacs! (Ed. Gee Thanks!!!)

** ATARI Programmers & Developers ** (GO ATARIDDEV)

ATTENTION ALL DEVELOPERS!

We will be assembling a list of developer names and User IDs of those parties who regularly frequent the ATARI Forums for an upcoming publication. If you do NOT wish your name and PPN to be included in this published list (or to make sure that you ARE included in this listing), please contact SYSOP*Ron Luks 76703,254 and express your desires.

Michtron Update

Robert Washburn Director of Operations
For January, 1988 Release:

MICRODEAL announces the release of Slaygon for the Amiga and the Atari ST.

You have developed the ultimate infiltration device: The Slaygon. The Slaygon is the most sophisticated military robot ever created,

conventional weapons have absolutely no effect on it! Controlled from within by one highly trained specialist, Slaygon possesses the strength of a hundred men, the armour and weapons of a small tank, and the intelligence of its operator.

Now you and your remarkable machine are needed by the government to help uphold peace and justice in the world. The situation is critical and escalating. You accept immediate employment as an officer in the United Defense Force. A top secret dispatch has given you orders to destroy the Cybordynamics Laborotary facility at all costs. They are working on a strain of toxic virus which could threaten to anniliate all human life and allow them to capture the world without the use of destructive nuclear weapons. If you can disable their main computer, their facility will explode and their plans will be thwarted.

You have obtained a forged low clearance security pass. You must maneuver around the four different types of security robots that guard the complex and covertly wind through 5 miles of hallways and 500 rooms in this 1/4 mile square complex. There are five security levels: if you can find a higher level key card it will allow you to pass through lower level doors.

Clever planning went into Slaygon's defense system. A special Cloaking device makes Slaygon invisible to all security robots except the Base Commander (unfortunately, it also makes the guards invisible to the Slaygon). The Short Range Scanner notifies you of immediate danger. Your shields will absorb destructive energy. Slaygon has storage room for 8 objects out of over 3 dozen you can pick up that may (or may not) help. The only problem is the tremendous amount of energy these operations require! If your energy supply is depleted, Slaygon will cease to function and your mission will fail.

You have, fortunately, built a comprehensive Information Panel into your robot. You have an Energy Level Indicator, a Directional Indicator, a Map View of your movements from the top that is continually updated as you travel, and the Slaygon's 3-D Front View as recorded through its camera. The Message Display Screen allows Slaygon's on-board computer to communicate with you. Many of the features are color coded for easy use.

Activate the Slaygon and prepare for the most important mission in the history of humanity. Slaygon is available from MICRODEAL for \$39.95.

MichTron PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

TIME BANDIT by Bill Dunlevy & Harry Lafnear

Time Bandit is not only the newest game on the market, it's the biggest, fastest, most detailed video game ever designed for a home computer. This isn't sales hype; it's a fact you can see for yourself at your nearest Amiga dealer. For those who need more to go on, this program has plenty to offer:

In this game, you are the Time Bandit: an animated adventurer travelling through Time and Space in search of treasure. From a land called the Timegates, you can choose to enter portals leading to 16 different lands, grouped in 6 time periods. Visit medieval Fantasy Land, the Old West, the Future, Ancient Egypt, and Deep Space all in one game!

There's even a Pac-style dot-eating maze game in Arcadia's Shadow Land! Upon entering a land, you become trapped with the Evil Guardians: creatures intent on destroying you. You defend yourself with quick-firing missiles: blasting the Guardians, and earning your bounty. To escape, you must find the Key to the Lock blocking the exit, returning to the Timegates with whatever treasure you've collected.

The screen scrolls quickly and smoothly in all directions, letting you roam a landscape complete with trees and plants outdoors, furniture and 3-D style walls indoors.

The Bandit and his foes are animated in realistic detailed: from the threatening stride of the club-wielding ogre, to the amusing expression on the face of a bouncing red glob.

Time Bandit also features a unique Dual-Player mode that lets two people play at the same time. There's no waiting for someone to finish their turn; each player has his own independent screen section and can interact with the other player in any way he wishes! Beware of treachery though; if one player dies, it isn't necessarily the end of him!

This is the first arcade game that take full advantage of the ST's special 16-color graphics, and 32/16-bit, 8 megahertz processor. Written entirely in machine-language, the graphics are colorful and incredibly detailed, while the speed and response is remarkable even for a coin-operated video game. The quality and depth of the program are surprising til one considers the authors: Bill Dunlevy is an experienced programmer with a number of hit video games to his credit, and Harry Lafnear is a graphic artist and writer. It took the two of them seven months to write Time Bandit. The program is over 350K long, and you can see and feel every bit of it as you play.

Time Bandit is available from MichTron. Time Bandit is priced at only \$39.95. For information on this or any of our other products, contact: MichTron, 576 S. Telegraph Pontiac, Michigan 48053 Phone (313) 334-5700

Modem Noise Killer

With this circuit diagram, some basic tools including a soldering iron, and four or five components from Radio Shack, you should be able to cut the noise/garbage that appears on your computer's screen.

I started this project out of frustration at using a US Robotics 2400 baud modem and getting a fare amount of junk when connecting at that speed. Knowing that capacitors make good noise filters, I threw this together.

This is very easy to build, however conditions may be different due to modem type, amount of line noise, old or new switching equipment (Bell's equipment), and on and on. So it may not work as well for you in every case. If it does work, or if you've managed to tweek it to your computer/modem setup I'd like to hear from you.

I'd also appreciate any of you electronic wizzards out there wanting to offer any improvements. Let's make this work for everyone!

Please read this entire message and see if you understand it before you begin.

OK, what you'll need from Radio Shack:

- 1 #279-374 Modular line cord if you don't already have one. You won't need one if your phone has a modular plug in its base \$4.95
- 1 #279-420 Modular surface mount jack (4 or 6 conductor) \$4.49
- 1 #271-1720 Potentiometer. This is a 5k audio taper variable resistor. \$1.09
- 1 #272-1055 Capacitor. Any non-polarized 1.0 to 1.5 uf cap should do. Paper, Mylar, or metal film caps should be used, although #272-996 may work as well. (272-996 is a non-polarized electrolytic cap) \$.79
- 1 100 ohm resistor - quarter or half watt. \$.19
- 1 #279-357 Y-type or duplex modular connector. Don't buy this until you've read the section on connecting the Noise Killer below. (A, B, or C) \$4.95

First off, open the modular block. You normally just pry them open with a screwdriver. Inside you'll find up to 6 wires. Very carefully cut out all but the green and red wires. The ones you'll be removing should be black, yellow, white, and blue. These wires won't be needed and may be in the way. So cut them as close to where they enter the plug as possible. The other end of these wires have a spade lug connector that is screwed into the plastic. Unscrew and remove that end of the wires as well. Now, you should have two wires left. Green and red.

Solder one end of the capacitor to the green wire. Solder the other end of the capacitor to the center lug of the potentiometer (there are three lugs on this critter). Solder one end of the resistor to the red wire. You may want to shorten the leads of the resistor first. Solder the other end of the resistor to either one of the remaining outside lugs of the potentiometer. Doesn't matter which.

Now to wrap it up, make a hole in the lid of the mod block to stick the shaft of the potentiometer through. Don't make this hole dead center as the other parts may not fit into the body of the mod block if you do. See how things will fit in order to find where the hole will go.

Well, now that you've got it built you'll need to test it. First twist the shaft on the potentiometer until it stops. You won't know which way to turn it until later. It doesn't matter which way now. You also need to determine where to plug the Noise Killer onto the telephone line. It can be done by one of several ways:

- A. If your modem has two modular plugs in back, connect the Noise Killer into one of them using a line cord. (a line cord is a straight cord that connects a phone to the wall outlet. Usually silver in color)
- B. If your phone is modular, you can unplug the cord from the back of it after you're on-line and plug the cord into the Noise Killer.
- C. You may have to buy a Y-type modular adaptor. Plug the adaptor into a wall outlet, plug the modem into one side and the Noise Killer into the other. Call a BBS that has known noise problems. After you've connected and garbage begins to appear, plug the Noise Killer into the phone line as described above. If you have turned the shaft on the potentiometer the wrong way you'll find out now.

You may get a lot of garbage or even disconnected. If this happens, turn the shaft the other way until it stops and try again. If you don't notice much difference when you plug the Noise Killer in, that may be a good sign. Type in a few commands and look for garbage characters on the screen. If there still is, turn the shaft slowly until most of it is gone. If nothing seems to happen at all, turn the shaft slowly from one side to the other. You should get plenty of garbage or disconnected at some point. If you don't, reread this message to make sure you've connected it right.

Regent Product Brochure & Catalog

Exciting new software for your Atari ST computer! Power through your small business and home productivity needs with our reliable and inexpensive software products.

Regent Software
7131 Owensmouth, Suite 45A
Canoga Park, CA 91303
(818) 882-2800

Regent Base - A Full Function GEM Relational Database

Until now, there seemed to be only two types of databases available for your Atari ST computer. Some databases give simple-to-use pull-down menus and other GEM functions, but are frustratingly limited in function. The other databases offer the power of a programmable database, but lack the convenient mouse controls you should expect from your Atari ST. With Regent Base you get all the power of the best programmable database, with all the utility of an easy-to-use, mouse-controlled program.

Regent Base is a powerful means to manage the information you need now! Regent Base uses the industry standard database language, Sequel. The language uses English phrases to perform retrieval, insertion, and modification of all information stored in its database tables. A complete reference guide in the Regent Base Manual describes all of these easy to understand commands.

A special Utilities program allows you to visually create, modify or delete your database tables. You can also import or export dBase III TM files. And for Ramdisk users, there's even a database table move function.

Two applications are included with Regent Base: A Mail Merge program and Check Book program. Both of these not only are fully working applications, but are also examples of how your own custom database solutions may be developed.

Your Regent Base files are disk based, they're not limited to available computer memory, as is the case with other database programs. Regent Base even includes a hard disk installation program. It runs on any Atari ST system: Black & White, Color, 520ST, 1040ST, Mega ST systems, and European systems. Not copy protected.

The Guide Book - An introduction and tutorial for Regent Base

The Regent Base manual is enough to get most people started using Regent Base. For those that are intrigued by Regent Base's ability, but find it difficult to get started we now offer the Guide Book. A tutorial for Regent Base, the Guide Book is approximately 100 pages long and includes

a diskette containing the example programs discussed in the tutorial. The diskette also has a demonstration version of Regent Base to work with.

The Guide Book steps you through the most basic levels of Regent Base. The design principals, Sequel (SQL) language, and GEM object manipulation are covered. Then the Guide Book walks you through the development of two Regent Base applications. First, a Phone Book program which shows how easy forms are developed. Then, an Inventory program is built, which allows you to maintain information on parts, costs, and orders.

Sections Include:

- What Is A Data Base?
- How To Use Information Stored In A Data Base
- Creating Your Own Data Base Tables
- Components of Regent Base and How They Work
- Developing A Form Using The Forms Editor
- Using Regent Word II As A Procedural Editor
- Developing Applications And More. . .

Regent Base Applications - Business templates for Regent Base

As time progresses more and more applications will be made available for Regent Base. Currently we offer the following application disks:

Accounts Payable

- Detailed Payables Reports
- Check and Payment Advice Writing
- Aged Cash Requirements Report

Soon to be offered:

Accounts Receivable

- Vendor Analysis
- Invoice Generation
- Vendor Statement Writing
- Aged Receivables Report

Inventory Control

- Item Status Report
- Slow Moving Stock Report
- Reorder information

Retail Invoicing

- Sales Commissions Summaries
- Sales Recap
- Customer Billing

All Application disks come with a tutorial and general documentation. The disks are modestly priced and available individually or in groups.

The Inventory Manager - An Inventory Control with 20 Years Experience

Inventory control is money control. That is why we manage inventory rather than control it. You want to minimize the amount of money you spend on your inventory - which will delight the boss - but at the same time you want an accurate, well supplied inventory - which will delight your customers. The better your coverage, the more sales you are likely to have. Armed with The Inventory Manager you may well become the most valuable employee in your company.

The Inventory Manager is a comprehensive inventory control system with custom reporting and sales projections based on sales history. The Inventory Manager handles up to 40,000 parts and is ideal for small business and retail operations.

The Inventory Manager is unique in that it gives purchasing projections based on 7 user definable parameters. 11 inventory and ordering reports are built in, with the additional capability of generating Custom Reports.

Additional Features Include:

- Tracking of up to 40,000 Parts
- Instant Access To Any Part
- 16 Digit part numbers and descriptions
- Maintains up to 254 Vendors
- Sophisticated Order Generation
- Obsolescence Report
- Zero On Hand Report
- Overstock Report
- Inventory Analysis Report
- Tracks Sales History for 2 Years
- Complete Manual Including Examples
- Registered Users Customer Support

The Inventory Manager was written specifically for the Atari ST by Walt La Foret, a individual with 20 years experience in the automotive inventory control industry.

The Inventory Manager is hard disk compatible and works on any Atari ST system with Black & White or Color monitors. The user manual is written in a friendly tutorial fashion to bring you up to speed quickly.

FTL Confrence Highlights

Edited by Ron Kovacs

<NHARRIS> Our guest tonight is Wayne Holder, president of FTL Games. FTL's most recent products are Dungeonmaster and Oids, their previous ST game was Sundog. Wayne, can you tell us a little about yourself and about FTL?

<FTL> Hello everyone... I have Andy Jaros the Graphic Designer for Dungeon Master with me and also Dan Hewitt the designer of OIDS. When we get started we'd love to answer any questions you may have. Also, let me thank everyone in advance for the wonderful support you've given OIDS and Dungeon Master.

<J.M.MESA> I like many other here tonight have finished DM and are experiencing withdrawal symptoms... When can we reasonably expect either a sequel or another game using the same system? GA

<FTL> Well, we just recently announced that we will release in March an expansion disk that will work with your Dungeon Master disk, we'd like to keep a few secrets...GA

<MFARRAR> I have two questions. First I'd like to know what language you use for development. A brief description of the development process for new systems.

<FTL> We developed Dungeon Master and OIDS in Megamax C. However, much of the graphic code is done in assembly. Megamax C is nice because the PC relative code is small and the in-line assembly makes inserting special code easy. However, we have also developed an extensive game development system which lets us build new games without programming, but we're keeping details of this secret...GA

<W.SCHOONMAKE> Well, I have 2 questions for you this evening...The first is about Sundog, I love this game and think it was done very well for the ST, are there a set number of cryogens in the game? Question number 2, will FTL ever consider doing business software for the ST?

<FTL> Yes, there are a set number of Cryogens but at the start of the game, they are distributed randomly, except one Cryogen is always on the last system you will be able to reach. Well FTL already does business software under the banner of our Parent company Software Heaven, Inc. We provide OEM programs to other vendors to distribute. However, we reserve the FTL name for games...GA

<NHARRIS> How is your company set up? Are you the president of Software Heaven also?

<FTL> We are incorporated in Calif as Software Heaven, Inc. and do business as FTL games. We used to be incorporated as FTL Games, Inc. but reorganized for reasons that are too tedious to describe. I am president (Wayne Holder) Russ Boelhauf is our marketing director, Doug Bell is our technical director, Andy Jaros is our Art Director, and there others too numerous to mention... GA]

<J.JAVIER1> How many copies of Dm have you sold and if I could make a suggestion please use the keyboard commands more often in the upcoming games.

<FTL> Well, we don't release sales figures, but I can tell you that as of two months into sales for DM we have sold twice as many as we sold SunDogs for the comparable intro period. On your second comment, please send us a detailed letter describing how you'd like to see DM improved in the future. We love to get user comments because it helps us to review these suggestions before starting new games...GA

<R.ROSENDALE1> Our ST Grouop ST-JAUG has grown basically do to DM. They meet now weekly with a DM SIG for people with the same levels. How is the newsletter coming?

<FTL> We will release a DM hint book in March written by Tracy Hickman and the release will coincide with our next newsletter. Is that what you meant?

<R.ROSENDALE1> Yes, thanks.

<R.MIRSBERGER> i must be stupid, what is oids? and how can i get it. It is not at my local store and i don't see it advertised. ga

<FTL> OIDS is what we recommend for DM withdrawal symptoms. It's our first arcade game. It comes complete with A Construction Set that lets you build your own games and trade em with your friends. OIDS is a fast paced game that we feel combines the best features of many other arcade games. We will release a full OIDS demo in the next few days so watch the DLs for this one. If you have trouble locating OIDS, call us at

(619)453-5711 and perhaps we can locate a stocking dealer for you...GA

<CAPT.COOK> OK, as I understand it, the future will bring us more games from FTL using the same basic system as DM, but, are you going to stick to the fantasy genre? I'd love to see a sort of DM set in space.

<FTL> The idea behind DM was to create a way of building games that lets us recover the work we've already done when create new games. When we created SunDog, for example, all we had left afterward was a lot of specific code for this one game. In DM we created a system for making games and then created DM.. Thus we have a head start for any new games. They can be any type of game we choose. We are planning many different scenarios from Science Fiction to Horror.. Of course, because of development schedules, I can't say exactly what you'll see next. It depends on what we think people want to see next...Everyone...send us your requests..GA

<V.BUI> one suggestion on your future packaging, I think that you should make more either way i loved both games

<FTL> Thank you for your suggestion. We are getting better at planning our packages. Of course, its difficult to boil down a game as big as DM onto the back of a box. What specifically did you not like?

<V.BUI> its just that the boxes didn't give the feel of the game when I went to purchase DM and Oids the boxes didn't really tell me what I was getting. Also accurate Graphics on the Dm box would greatly improve it. the different graphics made me wonder if I was getting two different products... Ga

<FTL> Thank you. On the DM box we printed the first run of the box before the game was done and then changed the game. The recent versions we have shipped have a new box back...GA

<D.GINBEY> Are you marketing your games overseas? GA

<FTL> Yes, DM and OIDS are marketed by Mirrorsoft in London and distributed there, in France and Germany. In fact, we are just finishing a French and German version of DM...GA

<W.WAKEFIELD> I have two questions, first are the last two levels smaller than the 32 by 32 grid used on the upper levels and after careful study I have not discovered any spells that use the GOR symbol. Why? ga

<FTL> Well, I hate to say too much here in open session. Send us elec mail and I'd be glad to comment further. On the spell, GOR is not used currently, but is reserved for future scenarios...GA

<P.KESTELL> Earlier you mentioned that Tracy Hickman was doing your hint book, is this the same Tracy responsible for the Dragonlance stuff? If so is there any plan to move in that direction? Also when might we see some of the oids contest winners?

<FTL> Yes, the very same. Tracy was one of our DM Beta testers and has helped us greatly. I'd also like to give a quick plug for his new series from Bantam books called the "Dark Sword" Trilogy. The hint book is about 60 pages of in-depth DM strategy and hints. Also, We expect to announce the first OIDS contest winners soon. We've had many very good submissions. Remember, \$100 given away every month!!!

<B.S.OPLINGER> Two questions One .. Why is there no support for us monochrome users? Oids or even DM could have been done in mono without a loss of playability. Are you really going to return a disk full of submissions on ever disk submmitted like your flyer says? GA

<FTL> We didn't have room for the duplicate graphics and code that mono support would require, sorry! However, I understand that E. Brown Co. now has a cable that will hook a nonRF ST to a composite color monitor. Perhaps you could connect your ST to a TV or color composite monitor?

<B.S.OPLINGER> AS a person who does just that, let me say it is a poor second to a color monitor.

<FTL> Also, we expect to have a winner every month and every person who submits an entry will receive the complete set of winners on disk at the close of the contest. Could you repeat that last again?

<B.S.OPLINGER> Sorry, the suggestion of a composite monitor just don't cut it. Picture is much worse that the ST monitor. I do understand about space on disk etc, but just feel a need to bitch anyway. Done

<FTL> I symppathize. We spent considerable time trying to supppport mono but had to give up...GA

<FRANK> My coworkers have begged me to ask you whether you have any plans to release DM for the PC and compatibles. GA

<FTL> We are considering support for many new machines. The older IBMs just don't have the horsepower we need. Perhaps soon...GA

<J.ZUKOWSKI> A couple of weeks ago here on the ST Round table someone was complaining about programming bugs in Dungeon Master. Are you aware of any bugs? If so, what are they, and how can they be avoided?

<FTL> The first release of DM had several bugs which we have corrected. Version 1.1 which is availble as a free update if you return you disk and include return postage. Call (619)453-5711 for details. Also, I believe we have a notice posted in the SLs here about the current bug status. All the bugs we've fixed however, occur only in the last phases of the game and if you get the update from us before you encounter Lord Chaos, you can continue your from your saved game with no problems...GA

<NHARRIS> How can you tell which version you have?

<FTL> The notice gives more details, but when you save or restore your game the program displays a menu box. The upper right corner shows the version number (no number means version the first release.)

<J.DESIMONE> Thank you and aloha from hawaii. Is ther a sequel planned? We are never happy with what we have.

<FTL> Yes, and many other new games. If you missed it earlier we will be releasing a mini-sequel soon which is a complete new mini DM adventure that you can load as a saved game but acts like a new game. (a hidden feature of DM) watch this space for details...GA

<NHARRIS> I just wanted to send a pat on the back to your graphics person. The graphics in DM are stupendous! Best I've seen on the ST. Are there more than 16 colors on the screen? How were they created?

<FTL> Andy Jaros (sitting here) thanks you. Yes the screen shows more than 16 colors. We use special interrupt code and a few other tricks...GA

<M.HAND> Two questions. 1) What are the names of the stranger creatures in DM, the low to the ground things with green tentacles (on the Rat Level, the "Rock Squids" and the "Blue Meanies", as they've been called up here. 2) A vote for a Space (Star Trek-ish) scenario and a Jungle Scenario for you next games.

<FTL> Well you can call them anything you like, but we get asked this a lot so here are our names (you get to figure out what is what)...There are Giant Scorpions, Swamp Slime creatures, running gigglers, wizard's eyes, Pain Rats, Rusters, Screamers, Rock Piles, Ghosts, Stone Golems, mummies, Black Flames, Skeletons, Couatls, Vexirks, Magenta Worms, Trolins (blue guys), Giant Wasps, Animated Armours, Materializers (balls with tentacles), Water Elementals, Oitus (spiders), Demons, The Red Dragon, and Lord Chaos. Got it?

<J.JAVIER1> can we get the bug free version by sending in \$10 for a backup. i'd hate the thought of not having dm to play.

<FTL> Yes, we always send the very latest version whenever we send out a backup disk. Also, we are fast at issuing backups. The only exception is we sometimes hold backup orders a few days if we know a new release is imminent...GA

<L.GANZ> Hi. I just had 2 questions. 1. DM is too hard for me, will there be a toned down version? 2. Will there be a hard disk version?

<FTL> Well the hint book may be able help you get started. If you can build your characters up a bit the game becomes easier. If you like, you can call us at (619) 453-5711. We're glad to give phone hints. We may do easier version in the future. On the Hard disk, we can't really use a hard disk. On a 1040 or Mega we load everything to memory and on a 520 the lack of memory is what slows the game down, not teh lack of a hard disk...GA

<D.HADLAND> This question is for all software developers. Why isn't the version # put outside of the boxes or is that a marketing no no.

<FTL> Its just to difficult for us to coordinate the disk duplication with the packaging. Also, it is a marketing no no.

<J.ZUKOWSKI> With 512, 1024, and 4096 colors now possible on the ST. Do you see any new games that will use these extra colors?

<FTL> Well, it's possible but using these colors sucks up almost all the processor time. But, who knows.

<A.MILLS> Well Im kind of new at this. But I would like to make a few comments. First i hate to see a game with things like, commodore graphics shown and also is there really an auto_slew in Sundog? If so where??

<FTL> Well most people have criticized us because our game box graphics are LESS real looking than the real game. The Apple II version of SunDog had a component called an autoslew and certain (unauthorized) hints books mention this device, but it was removed from the Atari ST version of SunDog...GA

<JM.YANG> Ok, can you give us a sneak preview of the up coming mini-

adventure. Depth of the dungeon, number of monsters, theme, etc...GA

<FTL> I could, but I'd rather it be a suprise.

<B.HILTY> THANKS FTL FOR THE BEST TWO ADVENT/ARCADE GAMES OF THE 1987/88 SEASON. IM A ST DEALER IN HOUSTON TEXAS AND WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT NOT ONLY DID YOUR PRODUCTS SELL OVER 700 COPIES IN LESS THAN 3 MONTHS (4 STORES) BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN A GAME PRG (DM) HAVE SUCH A FOLLOWING. ALMOST EVERY ST BBS IN TOWN HAS AN FTL MESSAGE BASE...WOW...OIDS IS AN ADDICTIVE DRUG..GOOD SHOW FTL....GA

<FTL> Thank you, Dan Hewitt (creator of OIDS) Thanks you. Thank you

<GED> Do you have any plans do any real time 3d game systems that will allow two players to comete via modem? ga

<FTL> My lips are sealed!

<M.HAND> There are many items in DM that don't seem to do too much, are the details/uses of things covered in the Hint Book??

<FTL> Many items have secret and hard to discover uses. Of course, there are also many red herrings too. Did you know the Gem of Ages increases your healing ability. Also, the rabbits foot increases your luck. You have to be very observant to figure out the effects. We didn't want all DMs secrets to be easy to figure out...GA

<W.WAKEFIELD> have the same screen layout or does your system allow for flexibility in the way the game is presented.

<FTL> We can change the screen layout easily, but we're trying to develop a standard type interface so new games will be easier to get into. Sort of the same rationale behind the Desktop design.

<J.M.MESA> Just a few comments. First, why don't we see DM advertised in magazines such as Computer Gaming? Also I must congratulate Mr. Jaros for his amazing artistry!

<FTL> We'd like to advertise everywhere, but it takes time to put together an effective ad campaign. Many people don't realize the cost and time it takes to just DESIGN an effective ad. We are trying to get better here. Also, Andy Jaros says thanks!

<NHARRIS> Well folks, it's almost 9 PM here in warm California and this has been a great conference! Thanks to the FTL folks...for participating as well as for their great products, thanks also to all of you for attending tonight.